



Image from eBay

Kelley White

Vitrine

We keep these books under lock and key  
behind glass, on shelves of hard wood  
bracketed by carved wooden leaves

and faceless iron men. Their spines are torn,  
pages crumble. A tag hangs from the key.  
Marked by faded ink, illegible. Does anyone  
read these titles now? Ideas we may not need,  
will not remember. On top of the bookcase  
two white porcelain figures emerge from  
the top of this massive verdigris vitrine.  
Perhaps they are meant to be Chinese. They  
look as if they must carry a terrible weight,  
yet they cradle a grotto topped with bisque  
white rosebuds, a lid, formed as Venus' sea  
shell, and I now see she rises, as if in flight,  
but one arm is gone, one leg, and still  
she dances above her slaves and an empty  
clock face.

---

Kelley White's poems have appeared in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Rattle*, *JAMA*,  
and elsewhere. Her most recent book is *No. Hope Street* (Kelsey Books).